

Dead Sea Scrolls

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Introduction

- The Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient Jewish religious manuscripts that were found in the Qumran Caves in the Judaean Desert, near Ein Feshkha on the northern shore of the Dead Sea in the West Bank.
- The scrolls date from the mid-third century B.C.E. until the mid-first century C.E.
- First came to light in 1947.
- The scrolls represent Law and Prophecy.

Their Purpose

- The Dead Sea Scrolls comprising of more than 800 documents made of animal skin, papyrus and even forged copper deepened our understanding of the Bible and shed light on the histories of Judaism and Christianity.
- They offer insight into Jewish practice and belief as well as Hebrew and Aramaic vocabulary and phraseology within the context in which earliest Christianity developed.
- The scrolls help us understand the complex relationship between early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism (Parallel to epistles of Paul & Gospels).
- They never mention Jesus.

Further Understanding

- The scrolls are especially helpful in understanding the messianic expectations that surrounded Jesus.
- The scrolls offer broad background for understanding the early Jesus movement, its roots, its ideology, its organization, its critical approach and the phraseology it used.
- They should not be studied in isolation.

Bibliography

- Kister, Menahem. "The Dead Sea Scrolls" in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, Oxford University, 2017
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